

Life Immediately After the Fall

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[0 : 0 0] into too much detail. It's a chapter of course that deals with the immediate aftermath of the fall that's dealt with in the previous chapter and as we reminded ourselves in prayer of what a different world it is in many respects over the last few months compared to what it was before that how much more so was the case for Adam and for Eve and for their descendants as we move from chapter 3 to chapter 4 especially from the beginning of chapter 3 to chapter 4 because this is the immediate aftermath of the fall where human beings needed to live in a world that's now under the curse of sin and themselves too as fallen lost sinners so it's a hugely different world we just cannot imagine the huge difference between what was and what now is from the chapter middle of chapter 3 on through the rest of of the of the scripture really the first two sons that were born to Adam and Eve themselves encapsulated the words of verse 15 of the previous chapter because there the Lord said to the serpent I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring he shall bruise your head you shall bruise his heel and especially the emphasis there on enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman as we'll see later on in the study and there is a close relation between Cain and his actions and Satan himself as the head of the movement of evil but the first two that were born really shows this conflict how immediately it showed itself even between these first two brothers that were born to Adam and Eve the enmity between them is very obvious and is a feature of this first chapter dealing with the aftermath of the fall and we can see from this that from now on history is going to really follow these two lines scripture especially will follow these two lines the lines of faith and the line of enmity against God and against God's people and so you find also that this faith in God and this enmity against God are incompatible and that's worked through the rest of the scripture even coming to its to its climax in many respects on the cross itself where as was said in the book of Acts Jesus was put to death yes by the foreordination of God but also wicked men took him and crucified him so you've got the clash there between what is good and what is evil what is enmity against God and what is faith in God and that incompatibility will exist till the end of the world that enmity will not be removed entirely until the world is done and indeed it goes on into eternity too in relation to the two states of the lost and the saved well there are five features in the passages I want to mention briefly first of all there's encouragement because the first thing here that you read in the chapter is something which immediately follows on from the previous chapter and especially the ending of the previous chapter God drove out the man and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life that really in a sense you could say is the law there is God specifying this is the law this is my barrier you cannot enter to the tree of life anymore this way and so he's specifying there a particular

statute and a law and a provision that guards the way to the tree of life and here in chapter four we have the beginnings really of what you might say is the gospel as well that's always the case through scripture and through the history of God's church and through our own experience as human beings the law is what brings condemnation and brings curse but that's answered by the gospel which brings justification and blessing and it fits very well with chapter three and verse 20 where Adam gave the name Eve to his wife he called the name of his wife Eve because she was the mother of all living and I think in that there's a hint at least there's an semblance there of Adam's awareness that life was something that God indeed was going to restore and could be available again through God's provision and so as he names his wife Eve the mother of all living it's more than just the fact that every human being then came from her and she he and she were the head of the human race the fact that her emphasis on life is very significant there in the context of God specifying that they were now going to die they were now dead spiritually so the whole thing there is an encouragement really following on from the fall the first note in the bible is one of

encouragement is one that brings us towards thoughts of blessing thoughts of life thoughts of God providing something that will outdo the death and the fall that's just taken place that's the first thing second thing in the chapter is an emphasis or a feature on envy here of course you find the development of family life the development of religion and the development of worship from now on all of that develops in human beings and in their history and the chapter of course ends at that time people began to call on the name of the Lord and emphasis again on worship and of human beings coming to worship God but there's a major difference as we said between these two brothers and between what they represent as well and that difference really comes to the fore in their attitude and in their actions not only to one another but in respect to God as well in verse 4 you find the emphasis there that Abel brought the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions whereas previously Cain actually brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground and there's in the language that's used there it's not just so much the kind of material that they brought it's not just that one brought the firstborn of the flock for a sacrifice and also but whereas Cain brought the fruit of the ground it's not really the difference so much between what they brought but the attitude in which they brought it because Abel chose the best of the flock he took the firstborn and the fat portions he was careful to give to God what God deserved Cain made no such choice he just took off the fruit of the ground as if he was just saying well that'll do I think this is actually adequate and when you read then that God had regard to the offering of Abel but not to Cain that's what really lies at the heart of that distinction or difference it's the Lord viewing the heart it's the Lord viewing the spirit in which they brought their offerings not so much the offerings themselves but what they actually brought the mind with which they brought the heart with which they brought these offerings one a heart of faith Hebrews 11 verse 4 actually clarifies it for her for us because it says there in regard to Abel's offering by faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain in other words again Hebrews is pointing us to the heart and especially to faith it was in faith faith in God faith respecting God faith in terms of providing what God required and deserved that's the distinction between Abel and Cain of which there is no such spirit in whom there is no such spirit and so that's why God regard had regard to the one but not to the other but then it's interesting as we go down through the passage the Lord said to Cain why are you angry why has your face fallen if you do well will you not be accepted and if you do not do well sin is crouching at the door its desire is for you but you must rule over it now what I want to just point out there is that here is somebody who from now on is really regarded in scripture as a wicked person and really in a sense begins that line of enmity against God in contrast to the line of faith and yet here you find God not dismissing him immediately not actually saying to him the fact that you've done this means that I am done with you there is no availability of mercy verses 6 and 7 God is essentially in a way reasoning with Cain and he's saying to him is it not true that if you do well will you not be accepted in other words he's reminding Cain that he's on mercy's ground as we often put it so that if Cain seeks the Lord then the Lord will respond the Lord will be true to his promise but of course Cain doesn't do that but it is important to notice that point despite what Cain has done despite the spirit in his heart and despite the fact that God did not have regard for his offering found it unacceptable yet still he wanted Cain to actually think about what he had done and just think especially about how he would be accepted if he did things as God himself required and how often of course we ourselves come back to think about that that if God had dealt with us as we deserved then we wouldn't be here tonight and despite what we did despite what we do at times we still find ourselves on mercy's ground we still find God reasoning with us through the scripture that he will be true to his promise that he will accept us that he will accept our offerings if we come to him through faith in Christ and of course then in verse 8 you find a response there of of Cain where you find Cain coming to a to speak to Abel his brother and when they were in the field

Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him there is the outworking of the envy the outworking of the sin the outworking of the enmity against God himself as well as his brother Abel and it's important we realize and just take note of the fact that Cain's response included premeditated murder this was not an accident this was not something that Cain did that he hadn't intended to do this was not something that he was spurred into the doing of it by some word from Abel his brother he had planned it he took his brother out to the field and he actually in speaking to him there speaking to him to get him out to the field he then rose up against his brother Abel and killed him you see how how quickly you find sin and his working coming from chapter 3 into chapter 4 and before you've gone very far you're at the sin of murder you're at the sin of assaulting the image of God in such a grievous way and that really is the way of sin and 1st John chapter 3

reminds us that the connection we mentioned previously between Satan and sin and Cain here where he says this is the message you have heard from the beginning that we should love one another we should not be like Cain who was of the evil one and murdered his brother and why did he murder him because his own deeds were evil and his mother his brother's righteous so it's reminding us there in John's gospel that it really is all traced back to Satan though the blame is of course with Cain who has committed the act so there's encouragement there's also the emphasis of envy or the spreading of sin to that effect thirdly there's guilt when you come to verse 9 you find God coming to address Cain where is Abel your brother not of course that God didn't know as we've been seeing somewhat recently in some questions that come from God the intention of God the purpose of God is so that he will bring us to face the truth and that's what he's doing with Cain here as well really focusing Cain's mind upon what he's done where is Abel your brother so that Cain will have to face the fact that he's done what he's done and he has to face the consequences and his response of course is really the first indication if you like in scripture of an outspoken enmity and flouting of God's authority I do not know am I my brother's keeper you see the effect of sin immediately is projecting self I know what I'm doing I know when why I've done this I've done what I've done because that's what was right for me to do and am I my brother's keeper now that of course is something which really follows through into human society right up to the present day when you find neglect of people who are in need when you find the selfishness that so marks our society of course you're glad to see people who are not even Christians perhaps engaging in charitable activities to help the poor and so on but by and large we live in a very selfish society we live in a society that really maybe now and again puts something towards helping the poor but by and large lives without much thought to that from day to day we're not our brother's keeper in other words is how most people see their lives

I'm going to look after number one am I my brother's keeper why should I actually have any regard for the well-being of others and in many ways that's what lies behind such grinding poverty in parts of the world I think we mentioned on the Lord's Day how so many places that have the blight of poverty can trace it back to the kind of greed and the the way in which the leaders in those countries themselves reap the benefits of the resources for their own for their own bank accounts and leave the people still in poverty well verse 10 then God goes on speaking to Cain what have you done the voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground and now you are cursed from the ground which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood and again you find a repetition there of the word blood where you find the emphasis on guilt now thirdly there's encouragement and envy and guilt there's God's question to Cain to face the truth but here is the emphasis the blood of Abel is crying out to God from the ground and of course that blood of Abel is crying out for vengeance he has been wrongly killed and the blood that was shed is crying out to be avenged and we take that with us into the New Testament and again we find in Hebrews chapter 12 which speaks about the blood of Jesus speaking better things than the blood of Abel and this is what it's getting back to

[17:32] Abel's blood says avenge me deal with the person that's done this give the just punishment that's deserved whereas Christ's blood instead of saying avenge it's saying forgive cover the sin justify and so God's emphasis is moving from the strict justice to what is available in Christ and of course God's sentence there verse 11 is similar to the words that he spoke to the devil to Satan in chapter 3 and verse 14 and what do you find saying here now you are cursed from the ground which has opened his mouth to receive your brother's blood and the reaction of Cain really shows the state of his heart and of his mind and it's such a telling part of the passage that the more you read through it the more you see sin swelling and sin multiplying the more you see its effects the more you see Cain in the grip of sin and the more you see instead of him coming to avail himself of mercy he is actually going in the opposite direction he's becoming a worse person by every step and he says here behold

I shall be a fugitive my punishment is greater than I can bear you have driven me away today from the ground from your face I shall be hidden I shall be a fugitive and wanderer on the earth whoever finds me will kill me and you might think that there's an element there of regret or even a smidgen of repentance but when you look at it closely it's really just self-pity and fear of further punishment and fear of retribution and in a sense that's very much still a complaint against God more or less saying God why should you do this to me surely my sin doesn't deserve this kind of response and of course built into the theology of it there in the writer you find in these verses from your face I shall

be hidden whatever Cain himself made of that it certainly comes across to us when you know the scripture and when you know all of these emphases in scripture what they mean to be hidden from the face of God is to be cut off from life and that's really what

Cain is saying God's punishment for him is I shall be cut off hidden from your face and the Lord put a mark upon Cain and said lest any who found him should attack him well God actually puts the mark on him what the mark was nobody knows you'll find all kinds of different opinions as to what this actually means but it is important whatever the mark was whether it was something in himself where he constantly felt through his conscience some guilt about what he had done or whatever or whether it was an outward mark to actually show this is the man who committed the first murder you notice it's there he put a mark on him lest any who found him should attack him so it was something that God designed so that he would not himself be killed by anybody who wanted to take vengeance for the death of Abel but it's really saying to us

God has actually put a protective mark on him God hasn't killed him God hasn't destroyed him he's put a mark on him to protect him from being killed but you know it still really says to Cain look what God has done he's still giving you time he's still giving you further opportunity to turn to him if you want to nobody's going to kill you nobody's going to take retribution against you and so his guilt is very much emphasized and yet there is still there something that really has an opening towards mercy if Cain would want that then fourthly rather there's the emphasis on arrogance as the chapter unfolds you find again as we said sin the way it multiplies the way it continues to affect both Cain and his descendants and the arrogance that comes through in the line of Cain comes to the fore as you read from verse 16 onwards

Cain went away from the presence of the Lord again that fits with what's said being sent away from the face of God and they're very solemn words Cain went away from the presence of the Lord he went away from life and he settled in the land of Nod Nod in Hebrew literally means wandering that itself has a symbolic reference he became a wanderer and as civilization developed as you'll see this chapter is really in many ways a summary of many generations but as civilization developed you find the line of enmity against God developing in further ways of opposing God and opposing the line of faith as well he built a city he called the name of it after the name of his son Enoch and then you find the different descendants there that are mentioned so there's an escalation in sin an escalation in enmity against God and then that comes through in verse 23 as well where this descendant

[23 : 34] Lamech says to his wives he had deliberately taken two wives which itself is an indication of the spreading effects of sin and darkness of mind he said to his wives in a very boasting arrogant way this is really a challenge essentially to God Ada and Zillah hear my voice you wives of Lamech listen to what I say I have killed a man for wounding me a young man for striking me if Cain's revenge is sevenfold then Lamech's is seventy-sevenfold you see the arrogance that challenges God to that extent the bold self-reliance the glorying in the sin of his ancestor and just wanting to outdo it that's what Lamech is about and the solemn thing in that is for ourselves the further we go in steps against God the more one generation outdoes the previous one in enmity against

God the more arrogant it gets the more bold it gets the more self-reliant it gets in its relation to God and to his demands and to his word and really isn't that where we're at ourselves of course that doesn't mean that everybody in that generation was of the descent of Cain that doesn't mean in our generation of course that there aren't people who are as you very well know and as we are ourselves committed to God and yet the more any society goes away from God the more any society is led by those who rule away from God the more bold the more you glory in things that ancestors did that are known to have been contrary to the gospel and that's deliberate it's not accidental it's the way of sin it's the nature of sin and it's the nature of the sinner who goes away further from God rather than coming back in repentance so there's encouragement envy guilt arrogance and fifthly we're finally there at point five there's hope you come to verses 25 and 26 Adam knew his wife again and she bore a son and called his name Seth for she said God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel for Cain killed him to Seth also a son was born and he called his name Enosh at that time people began to call on the name of the Lord people that is within this new line of beginning with Seth that became the line of faith contrary to the line mentioned there directly from Cain this is the contrary line this is the different line this is the line of obedience and faith obedience to God and it's then in that that people began to call on the name of the Lord so the way that that Eve spoke there is significant and the name that was given the name

Seth itself means appointed and fits in with the words that she said
God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel in other words she seems to have cottoned on and caught the emphasis that God himself had said in previous words where he emphasized the life that was available rather than just a line of unbroken death but one of the wonderful things here is that and again it follows through into the rest of scripture the line of faith you might say this is the beginning of the covenant line there isn't an emphasis on covenant yet but that's what comes to be developed in the rest of scripture the covenant line that God establishes whoever it is it begins with it remains unbroken despite what happens on the part of others in the line of enmity and it remains unbroken despite the deaths that inevitably come into the line of faith itself as one generation dies and gives way to another the line of faith remains unbroken the line of honoring

God remains unbroken the covenant line remains unbroken through that so it's an interesting chapter it's a significant chapter in itself and I'm afraid it didn't bring out many of these points in any great detail or clarity but they are themselves significant as they form a bridge between the fall in chapter three and what you then find regarding Noah and the beginning of covenant relationship with Noah where God enters into covenant with him so this is a kind of bridge in the immediate aftermath of the fall I pray that God will bless these thoughts to us What means to him he will Dann m he be recorded he i l l He